

R381-60-21: ANIMALS

This section consists of the rules and supporting information pertaining to animals that are in a child care setting. The rules apply if any animals are regularly allowed on the premises whether or not the animals belong to the provider.

Bringing animals and children together has both risks and benefits. Animals teach children about being gentle and responsible. Nevertheless, animals can pose serious health and safety risks. *CFOC 3rd ed. Standard 3.4.2.1 pp. 119-121.*

(1) The provider shall inform parents of the kinds of animals allowed at the facility.

Rationale / Explanation

The purpose of this rule is to ensure that parents are aware of any animals that their child may come in contact with at the child care facility. This is important because the risk of injury, infection, and aggravation from allergies due to contact between children and animals is significant. *CFOC 3rd ed. Standard 3.4.2.1 pp. 119-121; Standard 9.2.1.3. pp. 349-350.*

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Public Health Association (APHA) recommend that only the following domestic animals have contact with children: cats; dogs; animals such as cows, horses, sheep, goats; rabbits; fish; and rodents such as mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils, and guinea pigs. *CFOC 3rd ed. Standard 3.4.2.1 pp. 119-121.*

Compliance Guidelines

- Animals that are allowed in the facility include the typical domestic animals such as cats, dogs, rabbits, hamsters, etc. as well as fish, amphibians, reptiles, and birds.
- The provider must inform parents of animals that are on the premises on a regular basis even when the animal does not reside at the facility. For example, if the provider chooses to feed a stray animal or takes care of any animal at the facility, the provider must notify parents of the animal's presence.

Low Risk Rule Violation

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Warning

(2) There shall be no animal on the premises that:

- (a) is naturally aggressive;**
- (b) has a history of dangerous, attacking, or aggressive behavior; or**
- (c) has a history of biting even one person.**

Rationale / Explanation

The purpose of this rule is to prevent injury to children by an aggressive animal. Animals which are bred or trained to demonstrate aggression towards humans or other animals, or animals that have demonstrated aggressive behavior in the past, should not be permitted on the grounds of the child care facility. *CFOC 3rd ed. Standard 3.4.2.1.-3.4.2.2. pp. 121-122.*

Compliance Guidelines

- Animals which are bred or trained to demonstrate aggression towards humans or other animals, or animals which have demonstrated aggressive behavior in the past, should not be at a child care facility.
- Although some wild animals may be legal to own, many are naturally aggressive and are prohibited at the child care facility. These include tigers, wolves, pirana, chimpanzees, some types of monkeys, bears, and several kinds of snakes.
- Boa constrictors, anacondas, and most pythons are examples of naturally aggressive snakes and are very dangerous. They may not be on the premises. Ball pythons are not generally aggressive and may be on the premises if the provider has documentation confirming that the snake is a ball python.
- Chickens, pigeons, cats, dogs, and ferrets are examples of animals that are not naturally aggressive.
- No animal that has bitten anyone or has a history of aggressive behavior may be on the premises whether or not they are kept in a cage, and whether or not they are vaccinated.
- Contact between animals and children should be supervised by a caregiver who is close enough to remove the child immediately if the animal shows signs of distress (e.g., growling, baring teeth, tail down, ears back) or the child shows signs of treating the animal inappropriately.

High Risk Rule Violation

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Citation and CMP Warning

- (3) **Animals at the facility shall be clean and free of obvious disease or health problems that could adversely affect children.**

Rationale / Explanation

Animals, including pets, can be a source of illness for people; likewise, people may be a source of illness for animals. The purpose of this rule is to prevent the spread of disease through contact with unclean or ill animals, and to prevent children from being bitten or otherwise injured by a sick animal. *CFOC 3rd ed. Standard 3.4.2.3. pp. 121-122.*

Low Risk Rule Violation

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Warning

- (4) **There shall be no animal or animal equipment in food preparation or eating areas.**

Rationale / Explanation

The presence of animals or their equipment in food preparation or eating areas increases the risk of contamination of food eaten by the children and staff. *CFOC 3rd ed. Standard 4.8.0.1. pp. 185-186.*

Compliance Guidelines

- Animals and their equipment, such as food and water bowls, cat litter boxes, or dog beds, cannot be within 36 inches of food preparation or eating areas. All kitchen counters are considered to be food preparation areas.
- To determine if there is adequate space between animal equipment and food preparation and eating areas, a measurement is taken from the outermost edge of the food preparation or eating area to the outmost part of the animal equipment.

- This rule does not prohibit fish bowls or tanks in food preparation or eating areas. However, these habitats need to be well maintained because fish and their aquariums may carry germs.

Low Risk Rule Violation

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Warning

- (5) Children younger than 5 years of age shall not assist with the cleaning of animals or animal cages, pens, or equipment.**

Animals, including pets, can be a source of illness for people. In *Caring for Our Children*, it is advised that children not handle or clean up any form of animal waste (feces, urine, blood, etc). This is especially true for younger children who may wash their hands less thoroughly and tend to put their hands in their mouths. *CFOC 3rd ed. Standard 3.4.2.3. pp. 121-122.*

Low Risk Rule Violation

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Warning

- (6) If school-age children help in the cleaning of animals or animal equipment, the children shall wash their hands immediately after cleaning the animal or equipment.**

Rationale / Explanation

The purpose of this rule is to prevent the spread of disease to children from animal food or any form of animal waste. *CFOC 3rd ed. Standard 3.4.2.3. pp. 121-122.*

The AAP and APHA suggest that caregivers instruct children on safe procedures to follow when cleaning animals or their equipment including:

- Use disposable gloves when cleaning animal equipment.
 - Do not let children clean aquariums because contaminated water can splash into eyes and mouths.
 - Do not dispose of used fish tank water in sinks used for getting drinking water or food preparation.
 - Remove all animal waste and litter immediately from children's areas.
 - Disinfect areas where equipment is cleaned after the cleaning activity is finished.
- CFOC 3rd ed. Standard 3.4.2.3. p. 122.*

Low Risk Rule Violation

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Warning

- (7) Children and staff shall wash their hands immediately after playing with or touching reptiles and amphibians.**

Rationale / Explanation

Contact with animals and animal waste should occur in a way that minimizes staff and children's risk of injury, infection, and aggravation of allergy. Hand hygiene is the most important way to reduce the spread of infection. Unwashed or improperly washed hands are primary carriers of germs which may lead to infections. *CFOC 3rd ed. Standard 3.4.2.3. p. 122*

Reptiles and amphibians are species known to carry salmonella. *CFOC 3rd ed. Standard 3.4.2.2.*

Moderate Risk Rule Violation

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Citation Warning

- (8) Dogs, cats, and ferrets that are housed at the facility shall have current rabies vaccinations.**

Rationale / Explanation

Diseases prevalent in wildlife, such as rabies and distemper, can infect unvaccinated pets. Vaccinations prevent diseases that can be passed not only from animal to animal but also from animal to human. *For more information, refer to the American Veterinary Medical Association at: www.avma.org/public/PetCare/Pages/vaccinations.aspx.*

Compliance Guidelines

- This rule applies to dogs, cats, and ferrets that are repeatedly (more than one time) on the premises whether or not they belong to the provider. For example, if the provider takes care of an animal at the facility or chooses to feed a stray animal, that animal must have current rabies vaccinations.

Moderate Risk Rule Violation

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Citation Warning

- (9) The provider shall keep current animal vaccination records on-site for review by the Department.**

Rationale / Explanation

Vaccination records help the provider track and keep their animal's vaccinations current as well as provide proof that the provider is in compliance with licensing rule.

Compliance Guidelines

- An animal's veterinary tag is acceptable documentation as long as it has enough information to show that the animal's vaccinations are current.
- The provider does not need immunization records for animals that are brought in for show and tell.

Low Risk Rule Violation

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Warning